

## Editorial

Quest for mystery of human life continues from antiquity both in the East and the West. The Socratic dictum 'know thy self' and the Upaniṣadic epigrammatic phrase '*aham brahma asmi*, i.e., I am *brahman*) are the epitomes of philosophisation for seeking significance or meaning of human life. When precedence is given to the universals or essence of the *brahmaṇḍa*, the particular or existence (*pinda*) is minimised. The neo-Platonists' quest was for the cosmic reality. They gave precedence to the universals over the particulars, or essence over existence. And the Aristotelian thinkers have been stressing on the particular, contingent, and existent objects. St. Augustine (AD 354-430) and others who were influenced by the Platonic universals as real, were swayed in the illusory ideal of the trans-social other-worldliness. It resulted in the static perspectives of the world and life negation philosophies. On the contrary, the neo-Aristotelian thinkers, say, Ockham (AD 1285-1349), St Aquinas (c. AD 1225-74), *et al.*, did not marginalise the ontic reality of the particular objects of perception. The social realities, thus, retained their vital salience. This controversy dominated the medieval ages. The neo-Platonists held that universals are existing independently of us as essences of Being. And the neo-Aristotelian nominalists claim that nothing is common to the ontology of objects except our imposition of names or shared attributes. This controversy between neo-Platonic realism and Aristotelian nominalism ruled over the medieval religio-philosophical social scenario. It continued in the medieval ages till a Christian philosopher St. Aquinas questioned the Augustinian doctrine of *a priorism* and restored the Aristotelian intellectualism and *a posteriori* knowledge based on the external real world. And Averroes (Ibn Rushd, AD 1126-98) a philosopher of the *Qur'ānic* legacy and commentator of the Aristotelian metaphysics also emphasised reality of the particular objects and historicity of the prophetic linear time which is basis of the dynamic view of human life. In simple words, it was reaffirmation of reality of man as a concrete unit in the societal space.

The nominalists continued the Heracleitian tradition of eternal flux. This idea was also developed in the French tradition by Pierre Abélard's (AD 1070-1142) 'conceptualism' as a *via media* between

Platonic realism of the universals (essences) and Aristotelian nominalism of the particulars as real. In the intellectual traditions this philosophical problem was not prevalent only in the Western hemisphere, but similar philosophical issues and perspectives were contemplated and debated in the ancient and medieval Indian traditions amongst the Buddhists and the Vedantists. In the Indian religio-philosophical scene the Śramaṇic tradition of Buddhism, an antipodes to the Brahmanic eternalism, tried to restore social realities through its theory of *apohavāda* (exclusivism or negationism). The concept of *apoha* was conceived by the Buddha himself and it was developed by the Buddhist logicians, Dignāga (sixth century) and Dharmakīrti (seventh century) as an epistemic significance articulated through cognitive conceptual constructs (*vikalpa*). These thinkers based their metaphysical reality on the eternal flux. In order to strike an optimum balance between Eternity and temporality, the Sikh Gurus carried forth their crusade of revivification of fluxional stark social reality. All these philosophers inferred from the perceptions (*pratyakṣa*) of the real point-instants (*kṣaṇas*). Past *samśkāras* as a *priori* reservoir of knowledge was ruled out in the context of dynamic ontic reality. This is the genesis of human creativity. It is a creative construct based on rational argumentation that helps to reach out the core of meaning of human life and the world.

Humanities and social sciences are the outcome of self-reliant rationalism of Enlightenment. Modern scientific discoveries, inventions, and the corresponding developments in the epistemological modes have been of great significance in the restoration of social reality. With the impact of Nietzschean (AD 1840-1900) 'perspectivism' the objectivity of truth is negated. Relativity of truth is a matter of interpretation of the eternally fluxional social phenomena. Modern thinkers create their coveted ideals of social spaces and, then, try to historicise them on the earth. New techniques of interpretation evolved by the Western philosophers and social scientists are of immense use. In this field the Western thinkers are far ahead of us. Their new techniques are so attractive that with their help we can attempt to critique a sound appreciation of the old rejection of the Euro-centric tools of hermeneutics. The persecuted minority of the European tradition, the resilient Jews have done a remarkable contribution in this field. There is no harm in learning some valuable innovative ideas from their new objective and philosophical methods, but we should not do it at the cost of our own distinct indigenous cultural conditions,

which have been developed over the centuries on our soil. It enjoins upon us to revivify our spiritual treasure trove of cultural heritage.

The thread of cultural renaissance was carried out in the medieval Bhakti cult ever since the sixth century AD. Continuing the dynamicity of the neo-Buddhist tradition the Tamil Siddhas restored ontic reality of the human person (*pinda*). For them human consciousness, inherently entombed in the body, is a micro-unity. The cosmic reality (*brahmaṇḍa*) mirrors and functions through micro-unity (*pinda*). It was a reconciliation between Eternity and temporality or realism and nominalism. It restored historicity of human action (*karma*) in the social life. The divine sanctity of the Vedic language was replaced with the regional dialects as dynamic social tools of communication. Local dialects as tools of conceptual articulation of ideas or signs of external transitory facts were adopted. Thus supremacy of Sanskrit as a sacred language of the gods (*devabhāṣā*) was dispensed with the sacred and dynamic idioms of the devotional *ipse dixit*s of the medieval saints in the dialects of the subaltern folks and the tillers of the land.

New praxeological theory of meaning or significance was developed in the medieval devotional literature of the bhaktas and the Sikh Gurus. Word (*śabda*) as sign is not only symbolic of the still referents, but are indicative of dynamicity of the transformed semantic energy (*śakti*). Word is also interpreted as a creative principle. Apart from semiotic function of communication of ideas it also has a praxeological interpretation of the word. We find crystallised and standardised hermeneutical exposition of the word as apotheosised in the Sikh Canon, *Guru Granth*. It has synthesis of sign and significance or theory and praxis. I have tried to argue for it in my article on "Critique of Spiritual Voluntarism . . ." The transcendental reality is supra-conceptual, but human mind tries to comprehend it through signs, symbols, metaphors, and other semiotic tools.

In the field of social realities there is no room for Platonic 'reminiscence' of previous life or the Cartesian 'innate ideas' or the Kantian *a priori* 'apperception of knowledge'. We start from *de novo*. Human mind as a dynamic principle of creativity is taken as a blank slate (*tabula rasa*) at the time of birth. Experiences of the external real objects and culture inscribe their imprints on it. Human mind is endowed with creative potency. Even the modern neuroscientists on the basis of their experimental data say that human brain holistically functions as a mystery. Localised functions of the brain are qualitatively different when they function as a whole. This is the neurological basis

of human mind's creativity.

Human mind creates language to communicate ideas. Man can articulate concepts of all-comprehensive logical possibilities on the problematic issues. It helps him to structure new ideologies or world-views for ushering in social equilibrium. And the language being a social phenomenon is always changing. With the help of sensation, *imaginaire*, *intellection*, volition and other mental mechanisms man tries to comprehend all possible dynamic facts in the universe. And the perception of the world is also true. Words as signs are mental copies of the external objects, which mirror ideas. This is the outcome of creative process of human mind, which starts with the environmental, cultural and mental activities.

The mind functions within the specific social conditions. It, then, articulates social structure. It creates a web of interrelated ideal social space, which is called ideology. It is not to be envisaged as a static phenomenon. It is a dynamic theoretical social framework, which needs to be put to test in the existential human conditions. Optimum balance between *theoria* and *praxis* is the crux of ideal social ideologies. Since the undercurrent of the external objects and the human mind is in eternal flux, so ideologies are to be structured and restructured according to the changing social conditions. The debris of the past ideologies hovers over the present and the present ideologies pale into the future. So it enjoins upon us to reformulate the ideologies. This interpretation is based on the Buddhist, Heracleitian and Abélardian traditions of diachronic meanings or significance.

In the modern era there is no static metaphysical reality and absolute knowledge. Relativity of knowledge and creativity of human mind are the results of the transitory nature of social phenomena. It has eroded the medieval concept of absolute and static truth. In social and political fields despotic kingship is no more. Today is the age of democratic trends and crusade of mankind at large. Besides, the present process of globalisation has given a set back to human values. Every walk of life is being commercialised and materialised. The spread of liberalism in the Europe with science and technology is trying to lord over the decolonised countries. Gandhi was bitterly opposed to this trend. He laid stress on revival of the indigenous culture of India. Technology should not be allowed to progress at the cost of human values. For this purpose Gandhi preferred *swadeshi* technology (say, *carkhā*, *khadar*, *indigenous industries*, etc.). This was the underlying idea of Gandhi's "Hind Swarāj or Indian Home Rule".

The Journal aims at promoting researches on the central themes of deliverance of man, social sciences, scientific and philosophical understanding of the social institutions for articulating ideologies of the present civil society. It has been the earnest desire of the great social thinkers of the world as well. Their main objective was to bring about justice in the society. This ideal is very difficult to achieve in practice because the very materials of social realities and the societal relations are in eternal flux and short-lived.

With the genesis of the present Journal in 1994, U.G.C. Inter-University Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences at the Indian Institute of Advanced Study has shouldered this responsibility to promote researches in humanities and social sciences. For this purpose the Journal lays special emphasis on resurrecting India's distinct cultural identity in the context of modern hermeneutic perspectives to resolve global problems of humanity. It will try to synthesise Euro-centric and Indo-centric methodologies. The Journal is an open forum for the creative writers of high calibre all over the world to express their innovative views objectively, analytically and wherever necessary critically. It covers vast areas of humanities and social sciences. It encompasses subjects like philosophy, semiotics, religion, sociology, history, economics, political science and other allied subjects.

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